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## Senate

The Senate met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JAMES LANKFORD, a Senator from the State of Oklahoma.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, in these challenging days, our hearts are steadfast toward You. Lift from our lawmakers all discouragement, cynicism, and mistrust. Lead them safely to the refuge of Your choosing, for You desire to give them a future and a hope.

Lord, give our Senators the power to do Your will, as they more fully realize that they are servants of Heaven and stewards of Your mysteries. Provide them with the wisdom to make faith the litmus test by which they evaluate each action, as they refuse to deviate from the path of integrity.

Lord, keep them from being careless about their spiritual and moral growth, as You give them the courage and the grace to fulfill Your purposes.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, January 12, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JAMES LANKFORD, a Senator from the State of Oklahoma, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. LANKFORD thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### OBAMACARE REPEAL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the Senate just passed the legislative tools needed to repeal and replace ObamaCare. This is a critical step forward—the first step toward bringing relief from this failed law. The resolution now goes to the House. They will take it up soon. The next step will then be the legislation to finally repeal ObamaCare and move us toward smarter health policies.

The repeal legislation will include a stable transition period as we work toward patient-centered health care. We plan to take on the replace challenge in manageable pieces with step-by-step reforms. We can begin to make important progress within that repeal legislation, and we will continue to work with the incoming administration and the House in developing what comes next.

There are other steps we can take as well, including important administrative steps like confirming TOM PRICE as Secretary of Health and Human Services and Seema Verma as CMS Administrator. They can start stabilizing the health insurance markets that

ObamaCare has thrown into turmoil, and they can start bringing relief to the American people. There is a lot they can do.

There is lot we can do. We may not be responsible for ObamaCare and the harm it has done to so many, but we have been clear about our commitment to bringing relief from it. From skyrocketing premiums and deductibles to dwindling options on the exchanges, too many families don't know how they will continue to endure the consequences associated with ObamaCare. These families have called for a helping hand. They have called for Congress to listen to their concerns, and they have called for us to finally build a bridge away from ObamaCare and toward health policies that put them first. We just took a decisive step toward that goal last night.

Repealing and replacing ObamaCare is a big challenge. It isn't going to be easy. Nonetheless, we are committed to fulfilling our promise to the American people—and we will.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

### NOMINATION OF REX TILLERSON

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I came to the floor yesterday to voice my serious concerns with some of the remarks made by the Secretary of State nominee, Rex Tillerson, in his hearing.

I was worried that his milquetoast posture toward Russia, especially his failure to support strong U.S. sanctions—existing or proposed—bespoke a fundamental misreading of the geopolitical climate and the true nature of our international security challenges.

I was worried that, as Secretary of State, he only promised to recuse himself from matters involving Exxon for a

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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